



Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) in Deer

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Q: What is Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease?

A: It is a hemorrhagic disease caused by an infection of a virus with symptoms similar to other hemorrhagic diseases like Bluetongue virus and Adenovirus Hemorrhagic Disease.

Q: What are clinical signs of EHD in deer?

A: Infected deer become lethargic and lose their appetite, become weak, have bloody diarrhea, and show excessive salivation. They develop a rapid pulse and respiration rate along with fever, which is why they are frequently found lying in bodies of water to reduce their body temperature.

Q: What is known about the disease in Oregon?

A: The disease was confirmed in deer found dead in the Roseburg area of southwestern Oregon in the summer of 2014. ODFW believes this is the first time EHD has been documented in wildlife in Oregon.

Q: Where else is EHD found?

A: EHD has been seen in Europe and in the U.S., including Texas and some Midwestern states. 2012 was a particularly bad year for deer affected with EHD in the Midwest and Northeast areas of the country, likely due to prolonged drought conditions.

Q: How is EHD spread?

A: It is not contagious. It is spread to deer via the bites of *Culicoides* gnats (biting midges, no-see-ums). Low water conditions and stagnant pools and ponds provide ideal breeding conditions for the gnats that transmit EHD. No prevention methods exist.

Q: What time of year is EHD usually observed?

A: EHD usually occurs in late summer or early fall when warm and dry conditions cause animals to congregate at limited water supplies where the gnats also like to breed.

Q: Can it be spread to humans or pets?

A: EHD is a disease that only affects ruminants, which are hooved, even-toed animals. Humans and domestic pets such as dogs and cats cannot be infected with the disease. White-tailed deer are particularly susceptible, but it can affect black-tailed deer and mule deer as well. Cattle and sheep can be exposed to the virus but they rarely exhibit clinical signs.

Q: What is the impact to deer in our area?

A: The Roseburg area has one of only two populations of Columbian white-tailed deer in Oregon. Because white-tailed deer are particularly susceptible to EHD, biologists are concerned for the Douglas County population that was taken off the Endangered Species Act list in 2003.

Q: Is the meat of an infected deer safe to eat?

A: There are no known health risks of eating meat from a deer infected with EHD, although hunters should avoid harvesting deer that appear sick or unhealthy. Our veterinary staff also always recommends thoroughly cooking all game meat.

Q: What is ODFW doing to monitor the disease?

A: ODFW veterinarians and biologists are asking the public to contact their local ODFW office when they notice live deer with EHD symptoms or find deer dead without apparent injuries (such as from vehicle collisions). This helps biologists document the extent of the area impacted by disease. Biologist can then decide whether tissue samples are needed for testing to confirm EHD or other diseases. People can also call the ODFW wildlife health line at 1-866-968-2600.